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ABSTRACT

This publication about dance is a conversation between a professional dancer and a dance and humanities high school teacher. As part of the National Humanities Faculty Why Series, the book is intended to help students, teachers, and citizens maintain and improve their intellectual vigor and human awareness and to help them reflect on the purpose, methods, and usefulness of a wide range of human endeavors. The major theme of this booklet is the question of dance as an educational device, with particular emphasis on its potential for knowledge. The principal concern expressed in the dialogue is that educators should talk about, and at least begin to understand, the importance of dance in the schools. Educators should recognize movement as an alternative mode of perception and as an additional means of gaining knowledge about themselves and the world around them. Dance can sharpen the natural process of muscular awareness, and it is for this reason that dance should be recommended to teachers and to those responsible for education in general. A bibliographical note cites resource materials that are useful to teachers and students interested in dance. (Author/RM)

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WHY MOVE?

A CONVERSATION ABOUT DANCE WITH BELLA LEWITZKY CONDUCTED BY YVONNE McCLUNG

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The National Humanities Faculty Why Series

TITLES IN THIS SERIES

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Why Re-Create?	Burton Raffel and Vincent J. Cleary
Why Pop?	John Cawelti and Don F. Rogerson
Why Remember?	Erich Gruen and Roger O'Connor
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Why Move?	Bella Lewitzky and Yvonne McClung
Why Sing?	Wendell Whalum and David Day
Why Choose?	Harry F. Booth and Ronald W. Miller
Why Reason?	Edwin J. Delattre and Thomas J. Donovan

Foreword to the Series

This conversation bears a simple title: *Why Move?* Yet taken together, this and the other conversations in this series illuminate one overriding question: What does it mean to be human?

Of course there are no final answers to that question, yet there are hard-won understandings and insights available to us from many sources, past and present. We all too often fail even to ask the question. Thus we ignore the help available and fail to become more human, more compassionate, more decent than we are.

At a time when our problems are so many – racism, poverty, pollution, crime, overpopulation, to name a few – we hold that all who care about education are compelled to reexamine what is taught and why. We believe that the problems will not be solved without getting at the larger question underneath them: What does it mean to be human?

The NHF WHY SERIES, then, reflects the concern of the National Humanities Faculty for the full range of humanistic questions. These questions involve but are not limited to the subjects in the curriculum that traditionally comprise the humanities: English, social studies, music, art, and the like. Indeed, they embrace the purpose of education itself.

In this series, the titles range from *Why Belong?* (human culture) and *Why Remember?* (history) to *Why Pretend?* (drama) and *Why Sing?* (music). Each presents a transcribed conversation between two people – one an authority in the study or practice of a particular branch of the humanities, the other a person experienced in the hard realities of today's schools. In these informal yet searching dialogues, the conversationalists are rooting out fundamental questions and equally fundamental answers not often shared with students of any age. They are the vital but often unspoken assumptions of the delicate tapestry we call civilization.

These conversations are designed for the learner who inhabits us all – not only the student but the teacher, administrator, parent, and concerned layman. We hope they will offer new insights into our inescapable humanity.

A. D. Richardson, III
Director
National Humanities Faculty

THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES FACULTY WHY SERIES

WHY MOVE?

a conversation about dance with

Bella Lewitzky

conducted by

Yvonne McClung

Chandler & Sharp Publishers, Inc.
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About The National Humanities Faculty

The NHF provides outstanding humanists from the world of the humanities, arts, and sciences as consultants to schools. The program was founded by Phi Beta Kappa, the American Council on Education, and the American Council of Learned Societies under grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (although the findings, conclusions, etc., do not necessarily represent the view of the Endowment) and various independent foundations. Inquiries are invited: The National Humanities Faculty, 1266 Main Street, Concord, Massachusetts 01742.

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Introduction to the Conversation

ATHENIAN: So by an uneducated man we shall mean one who has no choric training, and by an educated man one whose choric training has been thorough?

CLINIAS: Exactly.

ATHENIAN: And, mark you, the choric art as a whole embraces both dance and song.

CLINIAS: No doubt.

ATHENIAN: Thus it follows that a well-educated man can both sing well and dance well.

CLINIAS: So it would seem.

Plato, *Laws*, Book II

With some exceptions, contemporary attitudes toward dance are positive and even enthusiastic. We take pride in having removed ourselves from the narrow and often suspicious ideas of our ancestors, and as a consequence, we not only see nothing wrong with this kind of activity, but are strongly inclined to encourage it.

The reasons for our optimism vary according to the type of dance involved. The more popular forms find favor because we see them, whether we be spectators or participants, as entertainment, as an interesting and pleasant way of filling ever increasing amounts of free time. On the other hand, we give our approval to what might be called "serious" dancing not because we always understand or enjoy it, but because we feel obliged to accept it as an enterprise marked by high purpose and creative result. Indeed, no matter how esoteric or bizarre it may seem, we dutifully acknowledge its claim to a place in American life.

There is a problem here, however, and it touches that peculiar tendency in human affairs to do the right thing for the wrong reasons. The difficulty does not lie in the kinds of reasons we are likely to offer on behalf of the dance. There is nothing at all objectionable about them, and as far as they go, they provide a more or less adequate justification for our support. Rather, it lies in the fact that we usually neglect the strongest argument for being concerned with the dance, namely, the important contribution it can make to the education of the young.

The value of the dance as an educational device has been recognized for centuries. And this should not surprise us if we think of education as aiming at more than the development of the mind, if we think of it as an attempt to foster human excellence in all its aspects. Taken in this light, dance benefits the individual primarily as a discipline and training of the body. Indeed, in many respects, it plays the same role as gymnastics or some other form of organized athletics. It contributes to muscular development, to physical strength, and to that overall energy and vitality so necessary to achievement in every kind of endeavor.

It also contributes greatly to that combination of movement skills we refer to as coordination, although here we encounter a significant difference between the result produced by athletics and that produced by the dance. Athletic training is designed to develop special skills in a given sport, and the kind of coordination it produces, while by no means without general application, is likely to follow that requirement. Dance, on the other hand, because of the diversity of movement involved, can be expected to produce a less limited type of coordination, a coordination with greater bearing on the routine activity of our daily lives. Its characteristics are a particularly attractive deftness and grace.

The development of physical skills, however, is not the only benefit of dance as an aspect of education. Flowing from these skills, or perhaps more accurately from the process of acquiring them, is a kind of knowledge about the body which involves, on one level, a sense of assurance about one's own capacity to move and to express meaning through movement and, on another, a deeper understanding of the nature of human movement in general. This is a difficult area to deal with adequately, rooted as it is in a type of personal experience not easily described or verified. And yet it cannot be neglected if the role of the dance in education is to be articulated in any concrete way.

In the conversation that follows, Bella Lewitzky addresses herself to the whole question of dance as an educational device, but with particular emphasis on its potential for knowledge. Miss Lewitzky is especially well qualified

to speak on these matters. She is herself a dancer and choreographer, and has both lectured on the dance and gained considerable experience in applying her ideas about it to the classroom. Her group, the Bella Lewitzky Dance Company, has been widely acclaimed throughout the United States and Europe.

It would be inappropriate here to attempt to paraphrase or summarize Miss Lewitzky's remarks; as the reader will discover, she is more than capable of speaking for herself. Suffice it to say that her principal concern is that we talk about and at least begin to understand the importance of dance in our schools. She asks us especially to recognize movement as an alternate mode of perception, as an additional means of gaining knowledge about ourselves and the world around us. Dance can sharpen this natural process of muscular awareness, and it is this, she feels, that most strongly recommends it to teachers and to those responsible for education in general.

This is hardly the conventional wisdom. The value of dance in the training of the young has long been acknowledged in the West, forming part of an old and still respected educational tradition. What Miss Lewitzky does is to challenge the role of dance in that tradition, not in an attempt to repudiate it, but in an effort to expand and refine it. Indeed, she is an innovator in the best sense, ever mindful of the fact that the past has much to offer those who are anxious to work for the improvement of the future. Forceful and to the point, her comments below are enlightening, and should enable all of us to respond more thoughtfully to the question "Why Move?"

Talking with her is Yvonne McClung, who, in San Francisco's Balboa High School, teaches courses in both dance and the humanities. She is therefore qualified to converse about both and about their interdependence.

Center for Continuing Education
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Thomas P. Bergin

WHY MOVE?

McCLUNG I suppose if we just start talking about "dance," some people immediately visualize *The Nutcracker* and others Martha Graham. Or maybe a traditional dance like the Irish jig or the Russian bear dance or the Virginia reel. Or American Indians performing a rain dance or Haitians a vodoo ritual. And I imagine a lot would think of so-called popular dance forms, the European polka or schottische or the American foxtrot or frug. Just the word "dance" lets us go a long way back into history and all around the world. Can we come up with a definition – or at least a common denominator – of what we're talking about?

LEWITZKY Just because dance means so many things to so many people, I'd rather, instead of defining it, narrow it down to an aspect that I feel perhaps has "universality" – always a dangerous attempt. Really, though, we've given everyone a clue in our title, "Why Move?" That gives us a beginning point for looking at the material that comprises dance.

Most definitions lack meaning until put to work. So, if we think of dance as a subject (not just as recreation, which is only one aspect of it), a traditional definition would go something like this: dance is the art form concerned with motion in time and space.

Now to render that definition workable. Space is a relative term. We're accustomed to identifying it, I think, primarily by sight. I think if you test people, you'll find they say they use that sense to define themselves in their environment. Possibly they might also be familiar with a sense of touch in their realization of their spatial environment. But very seldom will they, unless dance-trained, recognize the fact that they're kinetically, muscularly, aware of space as an entity. I think if you were to approach time in the same way, you'd find that time is recognized in terms of "passages of," although that's a manmade definition. Very few people recognize that they experience time kinetically, from the very center of their beings. There is a time which is defined by muscles, by heart, feet, pulse.

McCLUNG Are you thinking now in terms of an awareness of body fatigue? Body changes?

LEWITZKY Yes, in one sense. But there is something much more important than that. It's so close to us that when we concern ourselves with the very large and intellectual concepts of space and time, we tend to overlook what dance as an art form can offer us relevant to those concepts from the time we're in kindergarten almost to the time when we can no longer move. Of course, space as a concept is very sophisticated when we think of it in intellectual terms, in terms of outer space, in terms of science. But let's, instead, think of time and space in everyday terms. Let's think about how remarkable it is that the very first time you reached away from your body to grasp for something, you were picking up your first sense of space -- and that was when you first began to move. You already *knew* the smallest kernel experientially about space as a concept, because you'd lived it, you'd moved it. As a tiny infant you began to experience movement in time and space.

For me, there's significance in knowing what "front," "side," "back," "up," and "down" are -- those are spatial terms -- from your earliest weeks to old age. Every child who has moved may not be able to give words to them, but each has had direct experience in up, down, front, side, back, because each has moved through these social concepts from infancy, from the first reaching out itself.

And so too with time: children have had experiences, immediate experiences, with the abstract concept of time at a personal level, because you can't take a breath in and let it out without experiencing how long in time that takes. You live with a sense of your own personal pulse, which is an aspect of time. You asked about fatigue, and of course that too is a personal, physical experience, but for me far more important are those things central to a definition of your very living -- breath and heartbeat, which are experienced physically. Usually we bypass them, they seem so obvious, and yet I'm always pleased with the idea that we can say we already have a grasp of some very profound concepts in a most fundamental sense.

McCLUNG Of what significance, then, is this growing awareness of space and time to the individual?

LEWITZKY Well, let's say first that if you didn't know these things, if you had no spatial concept, you would be marked in the clinical sense as a person in serious trouble. There are clinical terms to define people who are frightened of space, people who cannot recognize space. We recognize these conditions as disorders. But, in the normal sense, I think that none of us could grasp an abstract idea unless we had had a piece of it inside us; I think that

abstract concepts spring from experiences.

The fact that I have a fundamental concept of space because I've lived with it, even though it may be without words, permits me access to more abstract spatial ideas. At the elementary school level, you wish to give a child the meaning of "front," "back," "side," "up," "down." As words, they are very difficult, because they are symbols. But if the child creates personal ways to move front, side, back, up, down, then there is a qualitative leap into the comprehensibility of the symbols.

McCLUNG A leap from the immediate, the experiential, to the abstract.

LEWITZKY Right, right. The children can be symbol-makers. Words are symbols, and if the children learn how to make symbols themselves – in this case, nonverbal ones – they have an open door to other symbol-making.

At a more advanced level, it provides the ability to cope with space and time – those broad concepts. A very brilliant friend of mine once said to a class, "There are only two things in this world which matter: yourself and everything else." I think that's one of those marvelous profound pieces of simplicity. As a dancer it immediately meant something to me. If you extend your arm from the center of your being out into space, that *is* a gesture which signifies you and everything else.

Recognizing that you have the capacity to deal with space, learning why you are uncomfortable in crowds, learning to cope with the space in which you live with security is a very meaningful personal experience that prepares you for other sociological experiences. Sometimes the disoriented, the so-called "turned-off" young individual who feels himself a mere number in a system badly needs to find out what his center is all about. And, in dance, we have the handiest instrument for finding out what your center's all about because the instrument is you. Once you establish that there's a viable product known as "you," capable in intelligence – body intelligence, not separated mind-body, but integrated, whole, mind-body intelligence, which you have been using since you first moved, using to pick up knowledge – once that fact is acknowledged and developed you can indeed move from your center to the external world.

McCLUNG Without feeling like a number in a system. When the center's strong, there's not such a tendency to perceive the environment as threatening.

LEWITZKY I've been amazed, in our work with children, to discover how very often when I ask the teacher to turn to a child and say, "What is it physically you would like to have happen?" the answer is "I wish I didn't feel so awkward." So often there's this sense of lack of confidence in their own body mechanism, their inability to cope with physical skills such as coordina-

tion, balance, etc. And we're not talking about vague terms like grace and beauty, although these are not without value. Some of these children really mean that they feel acutely incapable, as incapable in body language as they feel in verbal language. They recognize their great need to feel physical confidence. So yes, a strong center protects against the threat of the environment. Taking pride in their physical being and recognizing that they possess body knowledge about pretty impressive things – like space, time, symbol-making, motion – prepares them to move with a little bit of strength from themselves to the rest of the world.

McCLUNG But aren't we likely to run into trouble when we try to use dance to help these disoriented students? Many people feel it's a very esoteric art that only the initiates can understand. One of the most widespread misunderstandings about modern dance is that its movement has a literal meaning. When you talk about reaching out, or movement, or dance as being movement in time and space, I wonder how we can help students understand the abstract level without feeling unreatened. They're frustrated because they feel they can't interpret every movement, and so they feel it's going over their heads.

LEWITZKY I think that is, unfortunately, a common misconception. At times it's also one of the actual failings of modern dance. Speaking of dances and the making of dances – and I speak from a deep prejudice, which you'll have to accept and keep in mind – for me, dance is at its strongest when it is the most removed from its fellow art forms, not when it is the closest to them (although it exists with genius at all levels). If one accepts the fact that dance is not, for example, literature, then one must not judge it on the basis of literature. In other words, if we use the old saw that dance is a nonverbal language, then we should not try to interpret it in terms of a verbal language. It is difficult to define dance in words because it is not a verbal language.

What dance is for me is a movement language that consists of specific knowledge about things such as what it feels like to move through space, rapidly, slowly, to run in the face of the wind, to stand at the top of a cliff and look down, to feel airborne, to feel heavy – states of feeling that are very significant pieces of information and difficult to put in literary language. Even as I put them in verbal terms they lack true meaning. They have to do with how your skin feels, how you feel when you are close to or far from something, with very concrete pieces of information, which are transmitted and recognized by the onlooker. What the body response is to force, or a lack of it, to weight or a lack of it; what the body looks like walking in various states – all things which everybody who also possesses the instrument already knows, but can gain a better insight into. All this information is conveyed in

form, meaning the way you put together the elements of movement in time and space.

Perhaps an anecdote would help reduce the difficulty of talking about the nonverbal. I was working with Carol, a second-grade teacher whose group was chronologically at the second-grade level but culturally underprivileged and therefore probably at preschool level, really. At the time she was very concerned with a specific thing she had to get them to know, which was that the "a" in "mat" was pronounced one way, but when you put an "e" after the "t," you changed that whole thing qualitatively, the "a" was different, the word was pronounced "mate." Because I'm a strong believer in creative experiential body knowledge, I knew that if I looked, I would find something that she could use. So I said, "What do you really want?" And she said "I want them to know that the silent "e" joins to the "t" and affects the "a."

Now that's a big concept, when you think of it in terms of preschoolers. If you think about it, those pieces of information are not so simple. In addition they are not going to be of world-shaking relevance to this group of children, who really don't know why they should concern themselves with them at all. So I said what do they know already? This is where I like to begin: what is the "body knowledge" they already have? This is why I'm in love with dance.

All right, you've got three ideas there, each of them important if you think of them as concepts – not just in this language arts situation. Now let's get to the concepts. "Silent" is a whole idea. "Joining" is a whole idea. Why don't we tackle just those two things? Silent and joining. We'll get far beyond the words "mate" and "mat" and into something that is more inclusive for those children, more meaningful for them.

Carol thought that would be a pretty impressive place to begin, but said, "How do I do that?" (She's a nondancer, a nonmover, fearful of motion, which is of course understandable.) "How would you define the word 'silence'? How would you recognize it in motion? What does it evoke for you?" And she made a list of eight things. She said things that I'm sure you would say and I would say: creeping, tiptoeing, crawling, rolling, floating. She had a list of about eight or ten verbal equivalencies of silence. My suggestion was this: I don't know your children, I don't know what they'll do, but throw out the single word "silence" and see what they know about that word. They'll give you a definition in terms of motion, just as though they were giving you a verbal definition. You'll know what they know. And then let's follow that by telling them that they will go "silently joining." So that was her lesson plan for a fairly rambunctious group of students.

Carol went into the classroom, she threw the word out, and then her

mouth hung open, because they did creeping, crawling, tiptoeing, rolling and a few other marvelous things that we hadn't had on our list. And they joined – heads, shoulders, legs, knees. Some made themselves into one long shape of joining. They joined with great joy, and some accomplishment, in ways that of course we couldn't have predicted. At the end of that lesson, I said to her, "Carol, if I'd asked you what words your children do know the meaning of, would you have guessed that they knew the actual meaning of rolling, tumbling, creeping, and all the other words you might have put on a written word list?" She said, "Never. Never would I have known that they had an understanding of such a vocabulary, because I've been thinking only in terms of verbal language. And it's very clear that they have a very deep and immediate knowledge of those words. They know what they *mean*. The fact that they can't spell them is a whole other thing we'll have to tackle, but I do know now that they know what they mean."

McCLUNG A perfect example of what you were saying, that the immediate experience leads further to abstract understanding.

Of course, it's not just a question of helping students to move, or helping teachers to get students to move. So many teachers – not just students – are, as you said about Carol, "fearful" of movement.

LEWITZKY Right. *Very* fearful.

McCLUNG I find that particularly by the time students are in high school, many of them have totally lost the sense of their bodies.

LEWITZKY Absolutely. And they've become afraid of moving in space and time. They've lost what they had no fear of when they were young students and teachers alike. Which is why I hope one day that teacher training will include training in dance – as an art form, incidentally – and will pick up these elements we are discussing, dance as serious subject matter, dance as the tool for a teacher as well as for the learner, and dance as a concept aid, conceptualization via a creative tool. (All the arts, I'm sure, possess these things; I've singled out dance because I know it.)

Basically we have to get back to where a teacher says, "I have neglected one sense." If a teacher blindfolded a class at the door, then brought them into the classroom, sat them down in their chairs, wrote a list on the blackboard, and said, "Now tell me what that list is," you'd say that was unreal, and yet that's what most teachers do. They inhibit the kinesthetic sense, which is just like the sense of sight or sound or touch in that it's a learning mechanism.

McCLUNG The very structure of most classrooms sets up inhibitions. The desks are very confining, and nothing in the room suggests even the possibility of movement.

LEWITZKY I think it's a little worse than that. Not only do you have to introduce movement as a viable subject and/or sense. You have to undo an attitude that's already there. Johnny the moving child is also a problem child. Therefore the tendency is to say motion is negative. Susy the quiet child sitting immobile at her desk is a nonproblem child. She may actually have severe problems, but they don't disturb the environment. So we make a misassociation and believe that motion is negative.

Now we're in real trouble, because there *is* negative motion. Most of us are trained to recognize negative speech patterns. We know what they are, and we can differentiate. We can say that is a negative speech pattern, this is a positive speech pattern. But in motion, we tend to say all motion is in a negative area. We haven't learned that some of it is negative and some of it is extraordinarily positive. So the teacher who is fearful of motion needs to have a chance to learn the subject area, just the way teachers need to learn math if they're going to teach math. That means for me that dance should be included in the training program. I don't think all teachers will cotton to it immediately. There will be a greater love on the part of some.

McCLUNG They don't all cotton to math, either.

LEWITZKY Right. In that sense it's strictly the same kind of subject matter: either you will like it – and have a bent for it – or you will not.

I think one thing teachers may not recognize is that young children in particular tend to have a fair amount of freedom in this area. They haven't yet frozen. They haven't yet been really convinced that motion is naughty. So they can learn in this area. Very often a teacher knowing only key words which relate to both subject and its action expression (as in "join silently") can turn to the child as a resource. Generally the teachers know their children and subject well, but they haven't yet the faith to use that additional sense of movement.

Of course, it isn't as simple as I'm making it. There are tools that a teacher has to have.

McCLUNG What are those tools?

LEWITZKY First the recognition of the positive aspects of dance, of motion. And second the recognition of how to evoke response by using key words.

By key words I mean those words which are likely to produce meaningful movement such as "move with clarity, move quickly or slowly, find a rotation with another body part, use force, direction, level, etc." These words are involved with the elements of dance: fast and slow (time), body part and kind of motion (motion), force (energy), direction/level (space), etc.

Let me use another illustration, something that happened in a fifth-grade classroom. (I imagine the process would be as applicable at a high school level.) The teacher was interested in seeing how movement could increase the immediate comprehension of his class where fractions were concerned. It was very easy for the dance teacher to do a fraction lesson, because you can immediately offer up certain movement things: a circle of moving children may be divided in half, in quarters, and so on. Gestures: a whole arm circle can be performed in fractions. If five fingers represent a whole, then one finger becomes one fifth of the whole and so forth. Fractions can be exposed in terms of body parts and/or motion. The classroom teacher observed the dancer teach his class a movement lesson about fractions. "Wow! You know, I think I can extend that." He was absolutely right: he knew his subject area better than she did. Once he found out what the tool was, which was a motion experience designed to clarify the concept of fractions, a fraction of a motion, or a fraction of group motion, then he said, "Let me do one." She reported to me that he came up with a better lesson plan than she. It was marvelous! So a few tools go a long way. Tools have to be carefully chosen, that I will grant you.

McCLUNG So far we've seen movement used as an aid to understanding language, and as a tool in math. Do you see it fitting into other purposes of schools?

LEWITZKY Well, since you're talking to someone who's a fanatical advocate of dance, the answer is yes. We haven't found a subject area yet either curricular or social, where we couldn't somehow apply the kinetic sense, mostly because we are talking about one of the physical senses. It's pretty much like asking, "Do you find any subject area, school purpose, or human need in which vision would not be an aid?" I can't think of one off hand. There may indeed be one, but I can't think of one right now.

McCLUNG Right now, throughout the nation, integration is a major concern. Do you see dance as an aid in furthering intercultural understanding?

LEWITZKY Yes, but I see it more in the larger sense of identifying the humanness of all beings than I do in the narrower sense of differentiating cultural dance forms. Incidentally, those are very valuable experiences and not to be neglected. One of the most pressing concerns in the schools right now seems to be black versus nonblack cultures. Here we dance teachers have a large advantage because dance forms from the black heritage have swept the world. Many years ago white Americans borrowed some of them and incorporated them into their work. Now black dance groups are an accepted part of the dance world and highly respected. Of course, this is a matter of tremendous pride to black people and of great value to nonblacks.

In many communities emphasis is put on the dances of the ethnic groups who live there. Here, too, pride in heritage, whether it be Italian-American, Polish-American, Franco-American, or something else, can contribute to a healthy sense of self-worth in the young people of that group.

To some degree, the study of cultural anthropology should prove to be a healing mechanism for racial misunderstandings. At a conference I remember hearing an American Indian cite the example of having an "Anglo" come to him and say, "Why have you named all of our cities such unpronouncable names? I cannot pronounce them." The stretch of imagination needed to cope with *such* a misunderstanding is a little frightening. No wonder it struck this American Indian with a feeling of despair. Had the woman known something about the American Indian, his art forms and artifacts and our historical role in relation to the Indians, we hope she would have been less preposterous. So, in that sense, yes, we can, through their dances, give different cultures a better comprehension of one another.

But I find something more interesting and even more important than that possible in dance. To learn the commonality of the human animal is, to me, more significant than recognizing cultural differences and learning to respect and enjoy them. This commonality we learn at the very beginning of any work with dance: we all possess basically the same instrument (barring aberrations), and we all have the same innate capacities to move, the same creative wellspring within us from which to make choices and definitions. That says to me let us define ourselves as human beings, not as cultural entities with differences so great that barriers are permitted between us.

Dance is a very easy place to bring people together – the arts are, dance in particular. If I say to a black child and a white child, "Can you carry your weights evenly with one point of contact between your hands?" they get so absorbed in sharing that experience that they forget differences in the color of their skin – and come to mutual solving of a mutual problem. I hope that that is the role that dance will play, healing breeches and helping to remove the artificial barriers that have been set up between people.

McCLUNG Certainly that's been my experience. I have a dance club in our high school that puts on a concert every year, this goes back now six or seven years, and I have dozens of students who are still friends and meet each other socially. Many ethnic backgrounds are represented in this group. Something happens to them in the course of working together with dance. It develops a relationship which just seems to endure.

LEWITZKY That also corresponds to my experiences.

McCLUNG How do you feel about the project that was described in *Why Belong?* The class was working on primitive ritual, religion being one of the

threads all the way through their humanities courses, and they read about and then reconstructed for themselves the Ndembu curse, with a medicine man, a patient, and the other members of the tribe. Some of them made up the music – obviously, they knew they could not authenticate it – and others made what they felt were appropriate ritual movements in the circumstances.

LEWITZKY I think it's just the most marvelous idea, Yvonne. Go on, I interrupted you.

McCLUNG That's about it. Obviously there was no attempt to be authentic – there's no way they can be – and yet apparently those students came away from the experience feeling, as they put it, "purged," just from what they themselves had done.

LEWITZKY That's an example of what I meant when I said the actual dances, the formal dances and their differences, very possibly have less value. They sound so handy, they sound so available, and in the book they look so good. But that less authentic experience you talk about is at the heart of what the students already know; they've all had some experience with many things expressed in time, space, and motion, which are the elements through which this group of students recognized ritual.

There is another important element and that is form: how does the symbol-making which is dance jump from individual experience to something larger? It is true that I have experienced the emotions, in motion, inside my body. I must have a vehicle in which to place these experiences if I wish to communicate. I must find a way to get my experiences to stand aside from me, and that is the function of form. Now I can invest a dance with my personal knowledge, and share it, step away from it, and have it exist outside me. I have placed my personal knowledge in the form of a dance and now I may share it with other participants, whether viewer or performer, and it may become culturally significant. So yes indeed, that humanities classroom is one of the places where dance and any art form becomes a remarkable vehicle of communication.

I'm fortunate enough to have at one time worked very closely with a school where the arts were considered central to education. The founder of the school instituted the role of the arts in the learning process even though she was not familiar with all the art forms. At one point she wanted the children to study Greek society, and a very important part of it was similar to the kind of ritual you're talking about, only this time the word would have been "myth." What is a myth? Upon what philosophy would ancient Greek society have been based, and how did it reveal itself? An enormous concept, again. She didn't want to begin by reading to the children and she asked me,

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"Do you think dance can play a role here?" I wasn't certain whether or not it could, but I gathered the children together to find out what they knew about myth-making. They told me that possibly myths were used in that Greek society to explain the unknown, to render people's fears into some kind of palpable shape, which could be coped with.

So I said, "All right, why don't you make up your own myths? Today's myths? What are *you* afraid of?" Well, they were afraid of all kinds of things —monsters, death, unknown shapes, darkness, night. And they began to do some dance myth-making. The dancing wasn't exciting at that point, though it may have been significant for them. I'm not sure. The magic came later, after I returned to Greek myths again.

"Now that you've experienced your own myth-making for today, what's one of the Greek myths that we might deal with in dance?" One child came up with the Greek concept of the formation of the world. From my point of view, this was a fine example because of its abstract quality. I know this about working with nondancing beginners: when they get very literal, they work weakly in dance; when they get very general and abstract, they work in an area where dance is strongest. That's where dance does something that the other art forms often cannot do as well. That evocative area is one of the strongest provinces of dance.

"First, there was chaos," they said. "Do you know anything about chaos? Do you think you could do anything about chaos?" Oh, no. They didn't know what chaos meant. "Out of Chaos came the Heaven and the Earth, and then came Order, Light, and Love." (I'm probably garbling that painfully, but for our purposes it will do.)

But still no place to start. Then one child held his hand up and said, "I can do Chaos." You know this type of story: The nonverbal child with reading problems, the child who showed up pretty much as an under-achiever. What was his intelligence quotient? Questionable. He was having all sorts of problems. But he volunteered to dance Chaos. He did the most exciting rendition of Chaos you ever would want to see. He did indeed know what Chaos meant. But far more important than that, he could communicate it, nonverbally. The class took it. The children came out on the floor tumbling, moving fully, chaotically. There was no sense of order, it was most disordered – thank heaven they didn't damage themselves – and they all took from him what he knew. They recognized it, and they suddenly knew, yes, we know what that is. He shared it, his knowledge, but he also engendered in them their capacity to share with him and with each other their perceptions about what they now recognized was Chaos. And so the whole group became involved.

Then came one of those moments that everyone likes to cite because it reinforces what you want to be true. Little by little that group formed order; they began to pattern themselves. The movement quieted, and they came to a sense of absolute order. Out of Chaos they certainly did create Order. I don't think they got as far as Love, Truth, and Beauty, but they certainly did work that myth out in what I think was quite a deep sense. They themselves had a feeling of achievement and intellectual satisfaction, because they could turn to each other and say yes, we do know what that myth was about. But not only did they know it, they experienced it, they felt it, they made it. And it was that kind of sharing that was so exciting. Not just for them, but for the teacher and for me, too. And besides, the teacher had learned something very important about her "slow learner": that child had a very good grasp of body information; she needed to work differently with him. So it was one of those times when you know that dance achieves what you know it is capable of achieving and wish it always could.

McCLUNG Yes. Your example reminds me of a humanities class I once had which consisted of many students who were extremely hyperactive. Early in the semester, I realized that if I could involve the students kinetically with some of the concepts we were covering, I'd have more success than with the usual lecture/discussion format. When we began studying the importance of myth and ritual in society, the class responded to the idea of creating their own ritual. Being much concerned with the importance of money in our society, the students decided to ritualize a process whereby social stratification was reflected by the form and manner in which money was passed from money changers to recipients. They devised an elaborate system based on the repetition of certain movements which clearly demonstrated that not all the money being received was equally valued. It also became clear that some of the symbols being used as money carried a higher status than others. In the discussion after the presentation, a whole flood of emotion was revealed, relating to the student's feelings about processes like obtaining welfare checks or using food stamps – both symbols of exchange.

Now, the activity I just described was definitely a symbol-making process for the students involved. They were able to communicate kinetically and then later verbally about an emotion and an experience many of them had undergone. Their movements weren't formalized into a definite dance, but they were certainly evocative on the feeling level. At first I was afraid that the subject treated was too literal to yield to an abstract dimension, but the students were successful. As a result of this experience, the class became very interested in the social-psychological purposes of ritual and they continued their study with more enthisiasm than shown previously.

Earlier you said that dance is at its strongest when it is most removed from other art forms. Do you include music in those other forms?

LEWITZKY Yes. I think music and dance are marvelously compatible. But they are different forms. They have in common the fact that they exist in time. Beyond that they do not have another element in common. They only share the time element.

McCLUNG But not space?

LEWITZKY But not the space element, except in parallel terms. Music can imitate or parallel a feeling of open space by touching our emotional memory of openness via harmonic structures, sound patterns, rhythmic development, etc., designed to trigger "open-space" sensations. Music doesn't actually occupy space or create spatial changes – i.e., it isn't a spatial art form but it does create parallels out of its own media.

Nor do dance and music share the element of motion, except in parallel terms. The form of dance is as different from music as it is similar. I think one gets into a trap and loses the value of dance as an independent form if it is used only to interpret another form. That they enhance one another is marvelous, and true. That's why, I think, so many musicians, worldwide, have worked closely with dance. I should limit that: composers, not musicians. In modern times you find that the body of Stravinsky's work was done for dance. And Copeland's. Tchaikovsky wrote in large part for dance, or at least very importantly so. Let's go back a bit: there's Handel, who was sustained by writing for dances of a different kind. Bach wrote minuets and polonaises, and remember Mozart's German dances.

There's an empathy between dance and music because of the time element. But I think they should be joined only after each has been born independently. I know that in training my choreographic students to work with music, I consider them ready to join hands with music only if they can take a piece of music, work totally independently of it, even rhythmically, and yet hear it and be able to come into it rhythmically and out of it with absolute freedom. They have to find their own thematic material which makes an independent statement, equal in importance to the statement the musician-composer has made. The choreographer, I think, needs to do much more than simply interpret the music. Dance and music, I do think, are marvelously compatible, but they are very different.

McCLUNG Might the nondancer trying to work with dance have an easier time without music? Say the fourth-grade teacher or the high school humanities team member? Isn't he only adding one more element to the problems if he tries to work with the music *and* the dance, neither one of which is a professional form for him? Or is it easier to have the time set in the music?

LEWITZKY Well, I think there's probably no one answer to that. But I've removed music entirely from a person beginning in dance, because the tendency is not to be comforted by music but to lean on it, to borrow its form, and never to know anything more than the interpretive aspect. It becomes too easy to avoid entirely the issue of what dance itself is.

You see, dance has its own time element. It's embedded in how long it takes you to move your arm. If you do this – I promised I wouldn't illustrate physically, but it's very hard not to. If you swing your arm in a circle, it has a natural time element, and that defines it. It already is there. You breathe within a certain time element. Unless you learn to recognize those things, you will be ignoring a very vital part of dance. So much music is digital; the musician is playing an instrument. Singing is closer to dance, a voice is closer. But those musicians who are digital are the ones that you tend to dance to most often. Especially young people, because they're excited by the current rock, or whatever the social thing is at the time. It's stimulating, incredibly stimulating. And that's marvelous. I find it's wiser to let the movement itself define its music than to try to interpret another form. Only when people are comfortable in the natural time elements of motion are they really able to come to music for more than pleasure, meaning "entertainment" or being "turned on."

What do you find in work with high school students? You've talked about the difficulty of getting them to move. Certainly they move to rock. Can you use that to wean them away from their narrow definition of dance? Or is it better just to forget it?

McCLUNG Forget the rock?

LEWITZKY Yes.

McCLUNG Well, I'm reluctant to admit this, because of your point of view about divorcing music from dance. I can see your line of reasoning. Yet I often begin with rock, or music with which they are familiar, because it can get them moving. And then, once I have them, once they're excited about movement, then I can remove music and get them to go with me into other areas of exploration. But I find that because of the sophisticated age of the high school level, unless they've already had an enjoyable experience, it's very difficult to get them to move in areas they're not familiar with, without music.

LEWITZKY Yes, I would recognize that. It's the reason that I so strongly advocate starting to work with dance at the elementary school level. At that point, they're so close to physical experiences – as information, incidentally, rather than recreation – that it's very easy to keep that line open. I quite agree that when you get to the high school level, if there has been this long

gap, it would indeed be a frightening experience to a lot of young people to think of dance in terms of creativity. It takes a great deal of skill to open that area positively. And if you find that it works well to start from rock – I'm a pragmatist – if it works, use it! As long as it's not physically injurious.

McCLUNG At the same time, there's so much creativity in the popular dance forms, when you look at them closely.

LEWITZKY Indeed there is.

McCLUNG For example, the other morning a girl came into the dance room and just put on a popular 45 and did this dance called "The Robot." Have you ever seen it?

LEWITZKY I've seen it.

McCLUNG She was the best robot I've ever seen. Very highly complicated manœuvers of the body, and much understanding and skill involved. I was very excited watching her do this, and I thought, really, how much creativity was already there. So many times we just need to show them how to elaborate on what they already know, help them become aware of it, so they can go on with it. There's really so much beauty there already.

LEWITZKY I think that is perfectly true, Yvonne. Today's social dance is unlike anything I know of in any other period in our American social dance. It is, in the first place, freed of partner constraints. It's an individual act. Although there are things like The Robot and The Monkey and The Frug – every few weeks there seems to be some new fad – nevertheless, within those fads, although each has its own style, there's an incredible amount of individual variation. The dancers are indeed improvising, although I think if you told them that, right off the bat they'd probably think you were a bit mad. But that's what they are doing, they're improvising. It's a very exciting thing to see, and I imagine could be redirected toward an extension of that experience.

McCLUNG Yes, I'd like to use this girl in a concert, for example, and take what she was doing and work it in in relation to another type of theme, take away the popular music.

LEWITZKY Right. I can immediately see what it would do. The Robot fractures the body into isolated parts, and if you could single that out for her and have her throw that among a group of dancers in space and time – slow down the time, speed up the time, make individual bodies one body – it would be an incredibly exciting group experience.

McCLUNG Yes. That's what I meant, and I can't wait now.

Of course we've been talking about my dance class and a girl who's already had some experience there. But I think the teacher who isn't dance-trained might very possibly use the fad of the moment as a springboard for getting into dance.

LEWITZKY Yes, as I said, if it works, use it!

McCLUNG What other resources are available to get things going?

LEWITZKY Dance, I guess, is poverty-stricken as to resources in comparison with the other art forms. The beauty and the lack of beauty of dance is that it's nonverbal. Beautiful in that the moment is always with you, and the lack of beauty in that you have little history. The moment stops with the performer. Agnes DeMille once said, "When a dancer sits down, the work is erased." That's sort of true. Yet, we are getting now, I think, some available material. There are a number of books which define dance very handsomely, written by people who have worked both in dance professionally and in the field of education.

Murray Louis has made several films which clarify the elements of dance. His films are admirably suited to both teachers and children. The National Endowment for the Arts has funded two films on the dance component of the Artist-in-the-Schools Program. There's a series of films now which define dance in the same way. Much work is being done by people curious and eager to fill this gap.

The Artists-in-Schools Program, under the National Endowment for the Arts, is available to a number of schools. And there are local dancers; that's a resource for most communities to investigate – what's already there. It can be good, it can be bad, but sometimes it is overlooked.

McCLUNG But you still feel that the first step is to have the students move themselves.

LEWITZKY Without question. Dance is a performing art. Movement is self-descriptive, and the rewards, the pickings, are famine if you're just going to talk about it or read about it or sit and look at film. The rewards just aren't there. One must really involve oneself in a performance of it. It is an activity and can only be truly experienced as an activity. The book of the body must be turned to as frequently as other textbooks, and not just in dance classes, as we've already said.

McCLUNG I agree, but how can the nonspecialist teacher deal with his own fears of movement before trying to get a classroom of students moving?

LEWITZKY A difficult question, and I wish I had a really simple, direct solution to it. Then you would have dance for everybody, or movement for everybody.

First of all, I think the cause of the teacher's feeling of fear, of incompetence, is lack of information. If information can be supplied, then that "fear," a great part of that reluctance to "make a fool of yourself" before a class, can be eliminated. Very directly, my advice would be something like this: Because

dance uses as its instrument the human body, you need to develop a little curiosity about the human body in motion. This you can do in a class with a good teacher and/or by experimentation on your own. Put to yourself a question: What part of the body moves? You will immediately find out that it is capable of motion only at the joints. How much motion is it capable of at the joints? Does it move in a rotary fashion? a hinge fashion? What is the nature of the joint? What is the nature of the motion? How far in space can that motion extend itself? Can I go from motion 1 to 2 to 3; and now can I go from 3 to 2 to 1, and so on? You begin to set up problem-solving situations for yourself. I hope – and really think – that you'll become so entranced with the capacity to continue this exploration that you'll forget to be fearful. You'll keep adding to the information that you need to overcome your reluctance.

Now that kind of exploraton isn't just the way the teacher will learn. It's the way everyone will learn. It has very little to do with age. The thing that you and your students, whatever grade they're in, have in common is the same body capable of the same motion capacities. I think we'd better admit, though, that if you wish to evoke motion in the classroom and still can't bring yourself to move, you can work sitting down. Once you have explored a few fundamental things, you can ask of the class: "How many ways can you move your arm?" "Can you move it ten ways?" "Can you teach the ten ways to all the rest of us?" "Of those ten motions, if you put three of them directly together very quickly, what does that do?" And you begin to explore the language of motion, via the child, who at this point is the mover, not the teacher. The teacher is now an interrogator, an observer. But I do hope that the teacher will keep trying to overcome reluctance to move. Why miss so much? There's no need to be a good mover. Movement can be evoked if you know where to look for it. The body – the instrument, the joint – the place where it moves. Space in terms of up, down, side, front, diagonals. Space between people. Unoccupied and occupied space. Joining of designs. And so on. These are very specific things that children can discover with or without your moving. But why not discover them with your students?

McCLUNG You think the teacher and the students can begin at the same level of experimentation and go on from there?

LEWITZKY Yes, I do. To me the key word for all is exploration. And after you have made your initial discoveries of the potential of the body to move in a certain number of fairly simple ways, keeping them always simple so that the results are clear and satisfying, then you have discovered, let's say, that you can define three motions of the arm. Now, if six people do these three

motions of the arm, is the effect different from one person doing those three motions of the arm? Is it different if done quickly? You're dealing now with time. Is it different if you organize the group? You're dealing with space. Is the effect different if you add to it, using another movement vocabulary: How many ways can I go up and down? With control, without control. How high, how low? Can I reach the floor level with two body parts? If I can do that, can I reach it with three body parts? With one? So you set up problem-solving situations.

McCLUNG You find these situations much more successful than asking students to deal with emotions, for example?

LEWITZKY Yes, I do. In the first place, the emotion itself is fairly muddied, and it takes a very advanced dancer to recognize the emotional shape (*shape* meaning its physical look) without having to look at the face itself. It's not necessarily true that a fist means anger. As a matter of fact, when I was researching emotionality and its expression in the body, I read Doctor Walter B. Cannon, who has done some work on this, and he states that the body looks the same in all heightened emotional experiences. There is little difference. All the body does is ready itself to react; it is filled with adrenalin. Physically there's no emotional clarity between extreme anger, extreme hate, extreme love, and extreme joy. The body is simply getting itself ready.

So that's a trap, it's an interpretive trap, and I think it's wise to avoid it in the early stages. It's more valuable at the beginning to recognize the potential of motion in space and time, and energy, and design. When you reach the point at which you're talking about how to put two or three things together, you're coming closer to emotion. Those are the vehicles through which emotion is made clear. Now you can come to emotion, and possibly render it – let's say, because we've talked about it before, as ritual, clear, shared, formalized, abstracted, symbolized. All those words now have to do with communication, it's the vehicle through which you would communicate.

Yvonne, I've rambled along rather circuitously from definitions to anecdote to generalization. I'm not sure how much light I have shed on "Why Move?" Perhaps I can summarize by saying we should concern ourselves with movement because motion defines life – because we think, learn and store information kinesthetically – because we need to express nonverbal feelings in motion – because motion is one of the ways we perceive, conceive, create, select and communicate. Aren't these some of the values we extol when we refer to a civilized and educated society?

Bibliographical Note

To prepare a bibliographical note on dance is, in one sense, a contradiction in terms. To quote Agnes DeMille once more, "When a dancer sits down, the work is erased." Still, helpful material is available, not as much as we would like, certainly, but far more than I can include in a brief note such as this.

The movement language of dance has been admirably defined and discussed by people who are dancers by profession and by people who work in a combination of the fields of dance and education. Teachers approaching dance and its use in their classrooms can find much that is valuable in these verbal-language materials.

In recent years, more and more films have been produced that make it possible for both teachers and students to see movement language while they hear verbal commentary. These films can be helpful, particularly with pupils in the older age groups, but they should never be substituted, at any age, for the actual experience of *moving*. If need be, give up the films, and have the children dance.

The following lists represent only a very small selection from much longer lists of books and films. Some of them include bibliographies from which teachers can glean additional information. But perhaps even this short listing will give support and encourage experimentation.

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